

**Schedule "A"**  
**OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 5**  
**TO THE OFFICIAL PLAN**  
**FOR THE UNITED COUNTIES OF LEEDS AND GRENVILLE**  
**(Agricultural Area Review)**

DRAFT

October 15, 2025

File D09-COPA-LG-2024-01

Purple = Amendments recommended due to public input following February 7, 2024 PAC

Blue = Amendments recommended following Council refinements and technical circulation input (PPS update references not highlighted)

**Amendment No. 5**  
**To the Official Plan for the**  
**United Counties of Leeds and Grenville**

**Table of Contents**

INTRODUCTION.....	3
PART A – THE PREAMBLE.....	4
TITLE.....	4
PURPOSE AND EFFECT.....	4
LOCATION.....	4
BASIS.....	4
PART B– THE AMENDMENT.....	9
INTRODUCTION.....	9
DETAILS OF THE AMENDMENT.....	9
SCHEDULE A TO OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 5.....	14
IMPLEMENTATION AND INTERPRETATION.....	15

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The following Amendment to the Official Plan for the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville consists of two parts.

**PART A – THE PREAMBLE** consists of the purpose and effect, location and basis for the Amendment and does not constitute part of the actual Amendment.

**PART B – THE AMENDMENT** sets out the actual Amendment along with the specific schedule and policy changes to be made to the Official Plan for the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville.

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## **PART A – THE PREAMBLE**

### **TITLE**

The title of the Amendment is “Official Plan Amendment No. 5 to the Official Plan for the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville”, herein referred to as Amendment No. 5.

### **PURPOSE AND EFFECT**

This is a Counties initiated Amendment to the Official Plan for the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville. The main purpose of this Amendment is to update policies in Section 3.2 Agricultural Areas of the Official Plan and to amend Schedule “A”, Community Structure and Land Use to update the existing “Agricultural Area” land use designation in the schedule to reflect the updated agricultural system as developed through a Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) study as required by the Province.

### **LOCATION**

Official Plan Amendment No. 5 ~~studied~~ ~~includes~~ ~~all~~ ~~lands~~ ~~located~~ ~~throughout~~ ~~in~~ the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville. It applies to various lands throughout the Counties being redesignated to, from or being maintained as Agricultural Area. Policies will apply to all lands designated Agricultural Area by this amendment.

### **BASIS**

Official Plan Amendment No. 5 has two components. The first component involves the inclusion of additional and amendments to existing agricultural policies in Section 3.2 of the Official Plan to recognize the agricultural system approach [undertaken through the Land Evaluation and Area Review \(LEAR\) study](#) to ~~update~~ ~~ing~~ and ~~protecting~~ the agricultural resources in the Counties of Leeds and Grenville. The second component involves a revision to Schedule “A” to replace the “Agricultural Area” mapping layer to reflect the updated agricultural system [undertaken through the Land Evaluation and Area Review \(LEAR\) study](#). Below is a rationale for these proposed changes.

### **Land Evaluation and Area Review Study**

In 2015, the Counties of Leeds and Grenville adopted its first Official Plan, approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) in 2016. Due to a compressed timeline for the Official Plan preparation, it was not possible to review the status of the lands included in the Agricultural Area designation. As a result, the Agricultural Area designation consists primarily of the agricultural areas as identified in the local municipal Official Plans that were in place in 2015. At that time, it was known/suspected that the agricultural land mapping was not comprehensive and that some agricultural areas were missing. Many of these local official plans and their mapping were developed under previous provincial policies and using varying definitions of prime agricultural lands. MMAH recognized this issue by modifying the Counties Official Plan to add policy 3.2.3 (a), which states: “The Counties, in consultation with the local municipalities and

the Province, will undertake a comprehensive Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) or equivalent study to assist in identifying and designating prime agricultural areas in the Counties prior to the next review of this Plan under Section 26 of the Planning Act.”

On July 29, 2022, the Counties of Leeds and Grenville released a Request for Proposals for the preparation of the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Agricultural Area Review, based on a modified Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) approach.

A modified LEAR methodology, suitable and tailored to the Counties identified candidate Agricultural Area lands following a comprehensive review and evaluation of all lands currently designated Agricultural Area and Rural Lands. A final agricultural system was developed to address this provincial requirement.

For the purposes of this study, the 2018 Agricultural System Mapping Method Technical Document from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) was used as a baseline methodology and adjusted to the specific needs of the Counties, as appropriate.

Extensive consultation with Counties staff, OMAFRA and MMAH staff, local municipal staff and their Councils, the Planning Advisory Committee and Counties Council, the Technical Advisory Group (formed for this project) and specific outreach to the agricultural community through meetings with the Leeds Federation of Agriculture and the Grenville Federation of Agriculture have further informed the final LEAR mapping product. Public notification occurred throughout the process.

Additionally, all landowners impacted by a recommended change in their land use designation because of the recommended agricultural system were informed by individual letters and a project website was maintained to provide consistent access to project documentation. There were 2026 letters mailed to residents. There were 276 residents who followed up the letter by contacting Planning Department staff. Where appropriate, the consulting team provided follow-up correspondence to residents. Staff attempted to reach out to each resident that contacted the project team by email, survey response, letter or phone call to respond to each inquiry.

The final agricultural system is a system of connected lands that form agricultural areas based on the LEAR methodology of scoring lands based on their calculable agricultural potential (mainly based on soil classification), then refined to: include lands over the selected scoring threshold; add lands where connected upon land-owner request; adjust boundaries to identifiable landmarks (road, parcel fabric, natural heritage feature); and reflect local agricultural knowledge.

As requested by Counties Council, staff undertook a final round of consultation with local municipalities to identify if there were any properties that local municipalities would like further reviewed. The Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands, the Township of Rideau Lakes, the Township of Edwardsburgh-Cardinal, and the Municipality of North Grenville identified

properties for further review. These properties were reviewed by staff according to the principles of the study and the refinement criteria with suggestions put forward to Committee and Council for further mapping refinements. Final direction on the properties to be removed from the Agricultural Area designation mapping was provided to staff, and all requests from local municipalities were supported by Council. These final refinements have been reflected on the revised "Agricultural Area" land use designation on Schedule "A" of the Official Plan Amendment and in the policy amendments.

### **Proposed Policy Changes**

The revised Agricultural Areas designation represents a net addition of 15,375.3 ha of land that are now subject to the Agricultural Area designation in the Official Plan. The main impact to residents who had lands added to the Agricultural Area designation is that agricultural policies restrict the ability to subdivide (including severance) their property in the future except for surplus dwellings or farm lots. Agricultural policies are meant to protect the agricultural land base from fragmentation, and agricultural policies limit conflicting land uses in the Agricultural Area designation. Existing uses, additional residential units, residential development on vacant lots, agricultural uses and agriculture-related uses remain permitted under the Counties Official Plan, subject to local Official Plan policies and zoning provisions.

The Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) is issued under the authority of section 3 of the Planning Act and came into effect on [October 20, 2024](#) [May 1, 2020](#). Section 3 of the Planning Act requires that decisions affecting planning matters "shall be consistent with" policy statements issued under the Act.

The PPS, 2024, introduced during the Land Evaluation and Area Review, [now requires](#) planning authorities to use an *agricultural system* approach. This amendment implements the Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) study and its resulting Agricultural Area designation mapping incorporating elements of an agricultural system approach and will designate and protect *prime agricultural area* for long term use for agriculture. The PPS provides policies regarding agriculture. The Official Plan policy amendments are consistent with these applicable statements.

## **4.3 Agriculture**

- 4.3.1.2 As part of the agricultural land base, *prime agricultural areas*, including *specialty crop areas*, shall be protected for long-term use for agriculture.
- 4.3.1.3 *Specialty crop areas* shall be given the highest priority for protection, followed by Canada Land Inventory Class 1, 2, and 3 lands, and any associated Class 4 through 7 lands within the *prime agricultural area*, in this order of priority.

### **4.3.2 Permitted Uses**

4.3.2.1 In *prime agricultural areas*, permitted uses and activities are: *agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses* based on provincial guidance.

Proposed *agriculture-related uses* and *on-farm diversified uses* shall be compatible with, and shall not hinder, surrounding agricultural operations. Criteria for these uses may be based on provincial guidance or municipal approaches, as set out in municipal planning documents, which achieve the same objectives.

4.3.2.2 In *prime agricultural areas*, all types, sizes and intensities of *agricultural uses* and *normal farm practices* shall be promoted and protected in accordance with provincial standards.

4.3.2.3 New land uses in *prime agricultural areas*, including the creation of lots and new or expanding livestock facilities, shall comply with the *minimum distance separation formulae*.

4.3.2.4 A principal dwelling associated with an agricultural operation shall be permitted in *prime agricultural areas* as an *agricultural use*, in accordance with provincial guidance, except where prohibited in accordance with policy 4.3.3.1.c).

4.3.2.5 Where a residential dwelling is permitted on a lot in a *prime agricultural area*, up to two additional residential units shall be permitted in accordance with provincial guidance, provided that, where two additional residential units are proposed, at least one of these additional residential units is located within or attached to the principal dwelling, and any additional residential units:

- a) comply with the *minimum distance separation formulae*;
- b) are compatible with, and would not hinder, surrounding agricultural operations;
- c) have appropriate *sewage and water services*;
- d) address any public health and safety concerns;
- e) are of limited scale and are located within, attached, or in close proximity to the principal dwelling or farm building cluster; and
- f) minimize land taken out of agricultural production.

Lots with additional residential units may only be severed in accordance with policy 4.3.3.1.c).

4.3.2.6 For greater certainty, the two additional residential units that are permitted on a lot in a *prime agricultural area* in accordance with policy 4.3.2.5 are in addition to farm worker housing permitted as an *agricultural use*.

### **4.3.3 Lot Creation and Lot Adjustments**

4.3.3.1 Lot creation in *prime agricultural areas* is discouraged and may only be permitted in accordance with provincial guidance for:

- a) *agricultural uses*, provided that the lots are of a size appropriate for the type of *agricultural use(s)* common in the area and are sufficiently large to maintain flexibility for future changes in the type or size of agricultural operations;
- b) *agriculture-related uses*, provided that any new lot will be limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the use and appropriate *sewage and water services*;
- c) *one new residential lot per farm consolidation for a residence surplus to an agricultural operation* provided that:
  1. the new lot will be limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the use and appropriate *sewage and water services*; and
  2. the planning authority ensures that new dwellings and additional residential units are prohibited on any remnant parcel of farmland created by the severance. The approach used to ensure that no new dwellings or additional residential units are permitted on the remnant parcel may be recommended by the Province, or based on municipal approaches that achieve the same objective; and
- d) *infrastructure*, where the facility or corridor cannot be accommodated through the use of easements or rights-of-way.

4.3.3.2 Lot adjustments in *prime agricultural areas* may be permitted for *legal or technical reasons*.

4.3.3.3 The creation of new residential lots in *prime agricultural areas* shall not be permitted, except in accordance with policy 4.3.3.1(c).

#### **4.3.4 Removal of Land from Prime Agricultural Areas**

4.3.5.1 Planning authorities may only exclude land from *prime agricultural areas* for expansions of or identification of *settlement areas* in accordance with policy 2.3.2.

#### **4.3.5 Non-Agricultural Uses in Prime Agricultural Areas**

4.3.5.1 Planning authorities may only permit non-agricultural uses in *prime agricultural areas* for:

- 1) extraction of *minerals, petroleum resources and mineral aggregate resources*; or
- 2) limited non-residential uses, provided that all of the following are demonstrated:
  1. the land does not comprise a *specialty crop area*;
  2. the proposed use complies with the *minimum distance separation formulae*;

3. there is an identified need within the planning horizon identified in the official plan as provided for in policy 2.1.3 for additional land to accommodate the proposed use; and
4. alternative locations have been evaluated, and
  - i. there are no reasonable alternative locations which avoid *prime agricultural areas*; and
  - ii. there are no reasonable alternative locations in *prime agricultural areas* with lower priority agricultural lands.

4.3.5.2 Impacts from any new or expanding non-agricultural uses on the *agricultural system* are to be avoided, or where avoidance is not possible, minimized and mitigated as determined through and *agricultural impact assessment* or equivalent analysis, based on provincial guidance.

## **PART B– THE AMENDMENT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Part B – The Amendment, outlines the changes that constitute Amendment No. 5 to the Official Plan for the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville.

### **DETAILS OF THE AMENDMENT**

The Official Plan for the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville is hereby amended as follows (modifications noted in red and with ~~strikethrough~~ text):

- 1) That Schedule “A”, Community Structure and Land Use, to the Official Plan is hereby amended by replacing the existing “Agricultural Area” adopted in July 2015 and replacing it with the “Agricultural Area” mapping layer adopted by Council and attached hereto as Schedule A to this amendment.
- 2) That Section 3.2 of the Official Plan is hereby modified as follows:

#### **3.2 Agricultural Areas**

Lands within the Agricultural Area designation consist primarily of *prime agricultural lands* as defined by a comprehensive County level Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) study and designated on **Schedule A**. The Agricultural Area designation is based on an agricultural systems approach to preserving the long-term viability and potential for agriculture by including Class 1, 2 and 3 lands primarily, as well as supporting lands that may be considered more marginal in nature but provide an overall strengthening of an agricultural area where appropriate. The Agricultural Area designation represents the Counties *prime agricultural areas*. are based on the agricultural areas established in the local municipal Official Plans, and are designated on **Schedule A**. *Prime agricultural areas* will be designated in local municipal Official Plans in accordance with Provincial

guidelines. This Plan requires that these lands will be protected for agricultural uses unless appropriate justification is provided for alternative uses.

Lands designated as Agricultural Area are intended to preserve and strengthen the continued **and long-term** viability of the agricultural community. Lands designated Agricultural Area are to be protected from **fragmentation and** incompatible uses, while accommodating a diverse range of *agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses*.

- 3) That Section 3.2.1 e) of the Official Plan is hereby modified as follows:

Promote a diverse, innovative and economically strong agricultural industry ~~that includes agri-tourism and the agri-food network~~ and associated activities, including local food production, by enhancing their capacity to contribute to the economy by accommodating a range of agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses *such as agri-tourism and the agri-food network*.

- 4) That Section 3.2.2 of the Official Plan is hereby modified as follows ~~by inserting a new adding the following to subsection (c) as follows, and that the remaining policies are re-lettered accordingly:~~

~~Additional residential units and garden suites shall be permitted in accordance with Section 2.7.4 of this Plan, local municipal Official Plans and local zoning by-laws. As per Section 3.2.5 of this Plan, additional residential units and garden suites would not be eligible for severance.~~

- 5) That Section 2.7.4 of the Official Plan is hereby modified as follows by adding the following as subsection (c), with existing subsection (c) to be amended to (d):

~~Additional residential units and garden suites in the Agricultural Area are to be located in proximity to the existing dwelling or in proximity to the farm building cluster or on non-Prime Agricultural Lands to minimize land taken out of agricultural production.~~

- 6) That Section 3.2.3 a) of the Official Plan is hereby modified as follows:

- a) Local municipalities will **designate and protect the Agricultural Area prime agricultural areas** in local municipal Official Plans in accordance with **Schedule A**. Local municipalities may designate and include policies for further prime agricultural areas by undertaking a comprehensive Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) or equivalent study in consultation with the Counties and the Province. A Counties Official Plan Amendment may be required.
- b) ~~designate prime agricultural areas in their Official Plans, through procedures established by the Province. Prime agricultural areas are designated as Agricultural Area Any reduction in the Agricultural Area designation will require an amendment~~

~~to this Plan and an amendment to the local municipal Official Plan. The Counties, in consultation with the local municipalities and the Province, will undertake a comprehensive Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) or equivalent study to assist in identifying and designating prime agricultural areas in the Counties prior to the next review of this Plan under Section 26 of the Planning Act.~~

7) That Section 3.2.3 f) of the Official Plan is hereby modified as follows and Section 3.2.3 of the Official Plan is hereby modified by inserting new subsections g) to h) as follows:

- f) Land may only be removed or excluded from ~~the Agricultural Area~~ *prime agricultural areas* for expansion of *settlement areas* in accordance with the policies of this Plan or at the time of an Official Plan update.
- g) Notwithstanding Section 3.2.3 f) of this Official Plan, the boundaries of the Counties Agricultural Area designation may be refined (reduced)) *beyond a technical amendment* without amendment to this Plan in a minor manner subject to the following:
  - i. The lands are located along an edge ~~part of the boundary~~ of the Agricultural Area; and
  - ii. A Qualified Person provides a professional opinion the removal is minor, in accordance with the refinement principles of the 2024 comprehensive LEAR and will not compromise the integrity of the adjacent ~~surrounding~~ Agricultural Areas to the satisfaction of the Counties; and
  - iii. An amendment to the local municipal Official Plan.
- h) *An Agricultural Impact Assessment may be required to evaluate the impact of any proposed new, or expanding, non-agricultural use on surrounding agricultural operations and lands. Impacts will be mitigated to the extent feasible.*

8) That Section 3.2.5 of the Official Plan is hereby modified as follows to add subsections h) and i):

- h) *The creation of a new lot(s) on lands that have both the Rural Lands and the Agricultural Area designation will be permitted on the Rural Lands portion of the land even if the retained agricultural lands do not meet the minimum lot area Agricultural Area lot size*, subject to all applicable policies including the minimum distance separation formula being met and provided the Agricultural Area lands are not reduced in size.
- i) Interpretation of the Agricultural Area designation boundaries shall recognize the intent to have the boundaries align with 2024 parcel fabric, roads and/or natural heritage features. Where the interpretation of the boundary on a parcel is unclear, the preference is to maintain as much Agricultural Area as possible.

- 9) That Section 4.2.3 of the Official Plan is hereby modified by adding the following at the end of subsection 4.2.3 (d):

Where *Provincially Significant Wetlands* are refined out according the above policy, the refined lands shall be designated Agricultural Area if they are located adjacent to or within lands designated Agricultural Area.

- 10) That Section 7.8.2 of the Official Plan is hereby modified as follows and renumbering of all definitions as appropriate:

**6. Agricultural condition:** means

- a) in regard to *specialty crop areas*, a condition in which substantially the same areas and same average soil capability for agriculture are restored, the same range and productivity of specialty crops common in the area can be achieved, and, where applicable, the microclimate on which the site and surrounding area may be dependent for specialty crop production will be maintained, restored or enhanced; and
- b) in regard to *prime agricultural land* outside of specialty crop areas, a condition in which substantially the same areas and same average soil capability for agriculture will be maintained, restored or enhanced. (Source: PPS 2014 2024)

**7. Agricultural system:** means a system comprised of a group of inter-connected elements that collectively create a viable, thriving agri-food sector. It has two components:

- a) An agricultural land base comprised of prime agricultural areas, including specialty crop areas. It may also include *rural lands* that help to create a continuous productive land base for agriculture; and
- b) An agri-food network which includes infrastructure, services, and assets important to the viability of the agri-food sector. (Source: PPS 2024)

**8. Agricultural uses:** means the growing of crops, including nursery, biomass, and horticultural crops; raising of livestock; raising of other animals for food, fur or fibre, including poultry and fish; aquaculture; apiaries; agri-forestry; maple syrup production; and associated on-farm buildings and structures, including, but not limited to livestock facilities, manure storages, value-retaining facilities, and housing for farm workers when the size and nature of the operation requires additional employment.— (Source: PPS, 2014 2024)

**9. Agri-food network:** Within the *agricultural system*, a network that includes elements important to the viability of the agri-food sector such as regional *infrastructure* and transportation networks; agricultural operations including on-farm buildings and primary processing; infrastructure; agricultural services, farm markets, distributors; and vibrant, agriculture-supportive communities. (Source: PPS 2024)

~~8-~~10. **Agri-tourism uses:** means those farm-related tourism uses, including limited accommodation such as a bed and breakfast, that promote the enjoyment, education or activities related to the farm operation. (Source: PPS, ~~2014-~~2024)

~~9-~~11. **Agriculture-related uses:** means those farm-related commercial and farm-related industrial uses that are directly related to farm operations in the area, support agriculture, benefit from being in close proximity to farm operations, and provide direct products and/or services to farm operations as a primary activity. (Source: PPS, ~~2014~~ 2024)

~~79-~~81. **On-farm diversified uses:** means uses that are secondary to the principal agricultural use of the property, and are limited in area. On-farm diversified uses include, but are not limited to, home occupations, home industries, agri-tourism uses, and uses that produce value-added agricultural products. **Ground-mounted solar facilities are permitted in prime agricultural areas, including specialty crop areas, only as on-farm diversified uses.** (Source: PPS, ~~2014-~~2024)

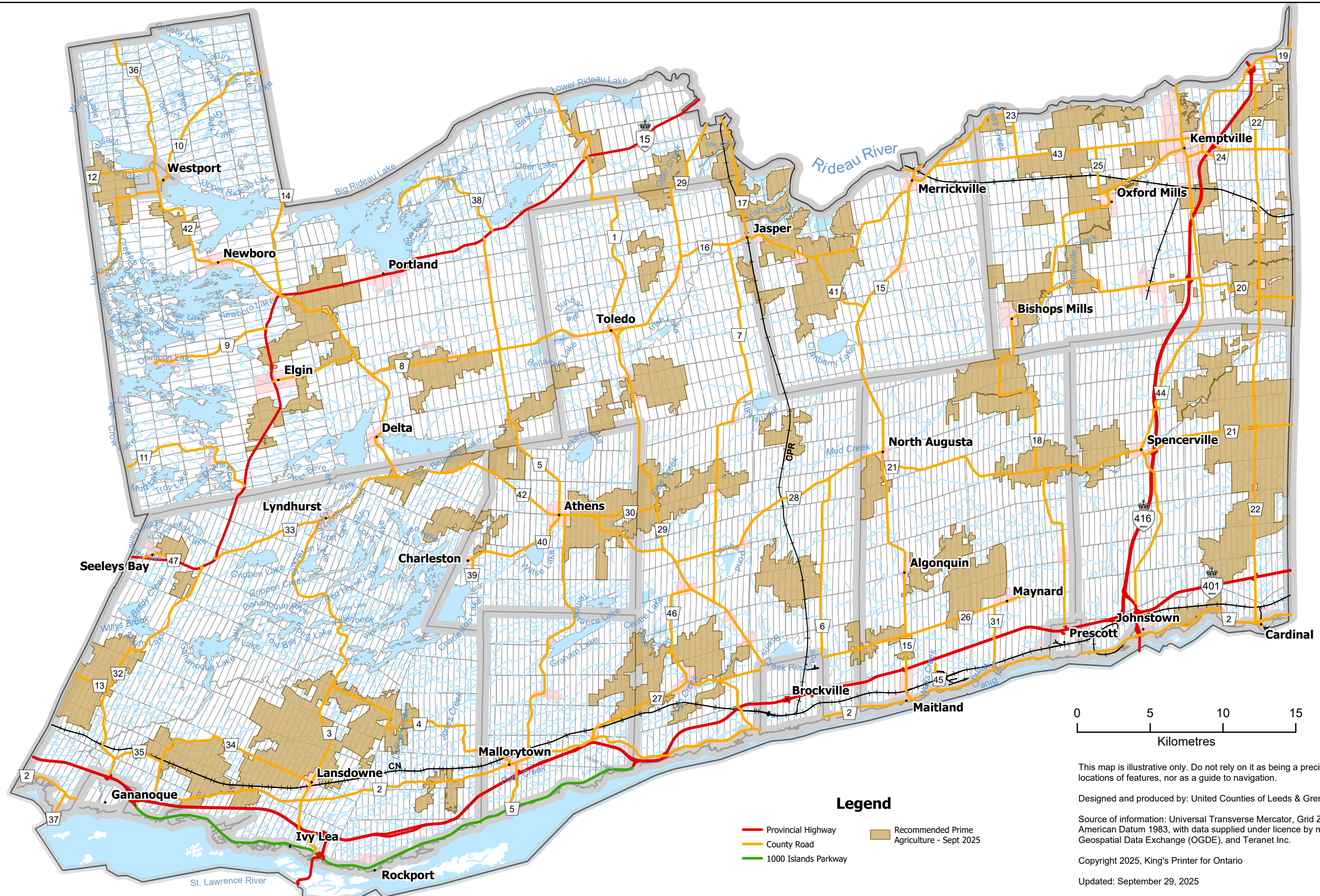
~~87-~~89. **Prime agricultural areas:** means areas where prime agricultural lands predominate. This includes areas of prime agricultural lands and associated Canada Land Inventory Class 4 through 7 lands, and additional areas with a local concentration of farms which exhibit characteristics of ongoing agriculture. *Prime agricultural areas* may be identified by a planning authority based on provincial guidance or informed by mapping obtained from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food Agribusiness and the Ontario Ministry of Rural Affairs or any successor to those ministries. (Source: PPS, ~~2014~~ 2024)

~~88-~~90. **Prime agricultural land:** means specialty crop areas and/or Canada Land Inventory Class 1, 2, and 3 lands, as amended from time to time, in this order of priority for protection. (Source: PPS, ~~2014-~~2024).

~~105-~~107. **Residence surplus to a farming an agricultural operation:** means ~~an~~ one existing habitable ~~farm residence detached dwelling, that is including any associated additional residential units, that are~~ rendered surplus as a result of farm consolidation (the acquisition of additional farm parcels to be operated as one farm operation). (Source: PPS, ~~2014-~~2024)

# Schedule A to OPA No. 5

Recommended Agricultural Area Designation (September 2025)



### Legend

- Provincial Highway
- County Road
- 1000 Islands Parkway
- Recommended Prime Agriculture - Sept 2025

This map is illustrative only. Do not rely on it as being a precise indicator of routes, locations of features, nor as a guide to navigation.

Designed and produced by: United Counties of Leeds & Grenville.

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Updated: September 29, 2025



## **IMPLEMENTATION AND INTERPRETATION**

The provisions of the Official Plan for the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville, as amended from time to time, shall apply in regard to this Amendment.

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